

THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

MARCH 1982 NEWS-SHEET

BEHIND SCHEDULE: Firstly, apologies for our extended hibernation, but we did point out in the October 1981 circular that to cut postage and printing costs we would defer the next despatch until after the AGM. So, apologies for the break in transmission, but we hope this circular will update things.

MERLIN TAKES WING: At long last No.85, the ex GN class V Compound 4-4-0, which the Society has on loan from the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum, has arrived at Whitehead. The loco made the trip in two hops, firstly by low-loader from Harland & Wolff to NIR York Road on January 24, and then hauled dead by rail from York Road to Whitehead on February 6. H&W carried out general repairs to the boiler and working parts of the loco, and this involved removing the boiler from the frames. A considerable amount of work remains to be done by the RPSI at Whitehead, the main jobs being overhaul of vacuum brake and lubrication systems, provision of superheater elements, firebox and smokebox brickwork, footplating, and painting of locomotive and tender. The tender to be used is No.31 which ran with VS class 207, and for a short period with 171. The tender requires extensive tank repairs, replacement of springs, and overhaul of brakes. So there is a lot of work ahead and as will be clear there is no chance of the engine being out for a considerable time. But you could help speed things up by coming down to Whitehead any Saturday and joining the 85 squad.

SETTING A PRECEDENT: It was, of course, our member Lord Dunleath who generously sponsored the H&W overhaul of 85. To acknowledge his role, and to thank him for his patience and interest, the RPSI Council has appointed Lord Dunleath Vice-President of the Society, a post which he has accepted.

HEY JUDE: The series of winter meetings held by the Society at St Jude's Church Hall, Sunnyside Street, Belfast, has again proved a big success. The highlight numbers-wise was the model railway night in December, when an estimated 500 people packed in. Our thanks to the exhibitors that night, and to those who have addressed meetings and shown films - they've certainly made the third Tuesday of the month something special.

GRUB UP: The annual soiree, held this year at the Hillside Bar, Hillsborough, was another notable night. Some 30 plus members attended, and food and crack were excellent.

STAR QUALITY: 171 and the Portrush Flyer dominated the final Ulster in Focus programme presented by UTV on January 11. The programme centred on an excursion to the seaside by steam train, and included some glorious footage of the Flyer.

STEAM SANTA: Thousands of children at Whitehead and Mullingar now think Santa comes on a steam train, not a sleigh. The Santa steam train rides, held on five occasions at Whitehead, and once at Mullingar, proved an outstanding success.

10-4 TRUCKER: Just to show we're not blinkered in outlook, the RPSI has now added a lorry to its fleet at Whitehead. The vehicle was purchased by a syndicate of three members and will be very useful for transporting heavy loads such as locomotive parts and coal between our depots.

HOW EGGS-CITING: Unfortunately we couldn't afford a troupe of Bunny girls, so we've had to make do with old Bugs Bunny. But he'll have eggs-tra carrots on the morning of Saturday April 10 (Easter Saturday) and will be all

ready to hand out presents to the children on board the RPSI Easter Bunny special at Mullingar. Loco 184 will be in charge of the train, which will operate a number of mystery trips from Mullingar during the day, along the lines of the Santa special. Provisional cost of tickets is IR£2.20 for a train ride and a present for the children. The action starts at 10am and members who would like to help Bugs on board the train should contact John Richardson. Tickets for the train from Mullingar station. Sounds like great crack!

TEACH 'EM A LESSON: We're planning a special schools' day at Whitehead, to take place on June 15, a Tuesday. We hope to have groups from various schools to go on educational tours around our premises, and fit in a steam train ride. So if you know of a school which might be interested, contact Johnny Glendinning. And if you could get the day off to help us, please do so.

EASIER SHED THAN DONE: The next major project at Whitehead is likely to be the erection of a much needed carriage workshop and stores shed. We're still working on costs, and it's likely it will take around two years to put up.

SCENE BUT NOT HEARD: Some late items on the sales front, all orders to Irish Steam Scene.

- * Ireland's First Railway, K.A. Murray (IRRS), £7.00 stg.
- * Cork Tramways, Walter McGrath, £7.50 stg.
- * Bradford Barton "Reminiscences" Paperbacks:
 - LNER Footplate Memories, £3.25
 - Locos at War, £3.25
 - Drawn by Steam (Tyseley), £3.50
 - A Loco Fireman Looks Back (WR), £3.25

and many, many more.

ANY AT-TRACTIONS? If you know of any model railway displays, traction engine rallies, railwayana sales or the like taking part in your neck of the woods (in Ireland), please make sure that our treasurer John Richardson hears about them ... before not after they have taken place. Fund-raising is absolutely vital to the future of the Society, so keep your eyes open.

READ ALL ABOUT IT: The next issue of Five Foot Three should be coming hot from the printers in about a month's time. If it coincides with the Thomond Tour booking forms, which we hope to have with you before Easter, you'll get a bumper bundle.

COACHING COURSE: Coach 231, the ex GN brake/1st which used to be the workshop carriage on railtours, has been found to be a much bigger restoration job than had been expected. Now the carriage has been "mothballed" to allow work to proceed on other coaches which are more immediate prospects for being put back into traffic. The carriage squad at Whitehead is concentrating on coaches 1142 (ex GS&WR all 1st) and 1327, a Bredin side corridor 3rd (ex GSR). Why not join the coach squad some weekend?

PUT IN THE PICTURE: Finally, it was nice to see pictures of 3 "RH Smyth" and 171 "Slieve Gullion" (taken by Charles Friel) being used on a recent cover of the ARPS magazine. And we hear that Railway World is shortly to feature the Society.